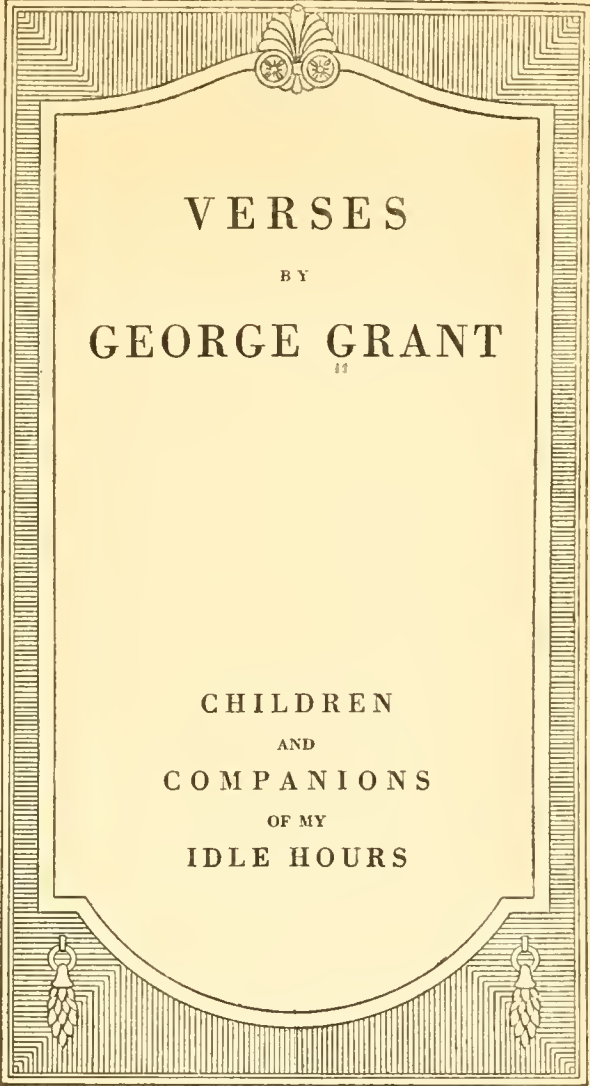


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VERSES
BY
GEORGE GRANT



VERSES
BY
GEORGE GRANT

CHILDREN
AND
COMPANIONS
OF MY
IDLE HOURS

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1919

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EHIS Jan 1920





TO My Dear Grandchildren, Mary Elizabeth Grant, Katrina Stone Grant, Jean Ann Grant, and George Grant III, these lines are dedicated.

I have not presumed to commit these verses to print on account of any literary merit they possess, for I am only too conscious that they are but commonplace. But I have been constrained to do so, in order that in after years these dear children may have them as a remembrance of me and as a slight token of the great love I bear them.

As the warm sunshine and balmy air of spring dispel the sombreness and chill of winter and re-awaken the world to a renewal of life, calling back the birds to re-people the fields and glades and to fill the air with the sweet music of their varied and beautiful love notes; kissing the dormant buds until they, blushing, open into vari-colored garlands of sweetness and beauty, and causing the trees and shrubs and fields to don a fresh new mantle of green and to put forth their blossoms with promise of a full and rich fruition which is the purpose and end of life; so these young lives, with all the warmth of their innocent, unselfish love, buoyant, eager spirits, have come into the afternoon of my life and opened anew the well-springs of love in my heart, causing my lagging pulse to quicken and filling the future with renewed interest and greater hopes, and causing the world to appear brighter and happier. In them I am living again. That man is poor indeed and to be pitied who cannot appreciate and enter into the joys and spirit of childhood.

To them I give my benediction. My prayers and my hopes are that their lives may be good and pure, beautiful and useful, and that they each may accomplish something in life to make the world better and happier, causing smiles instead of tears, joys instead of sorrows, and pleasure instead of pain.

And when I am gone, if a perusal of these pages shall bring to their minds a kindly and pleasant remembrance of me, my purpose will have been attained and my recompense will be complete.

ON THE BIRTH OF
MARY ELIZABETH

January 8, 1911

★ ★ ★

You are welcome, baby dear,
Thrice welcome to our home.
A place is ready for you,
A place for you alone.

Within our hearts you'll find it,
Where love will keep it warm,
And our strong arms will guard it
And keep away all harm.

You'll find the place quite ample
With room enough to grow,
For it's the finest mansion
That mortal can bestow.

When no baby's voice was heard,
Oft its halls were dreary;
Sweet music will your prattle be,
You winsome little deary.

Now, whatever you may want,
Just make your wishes known,
And loving hands will serve you
Till you are larger grown.

'Twas love brought Heaven down to earth
And left the doors ajar,
So that you could come to us
Without a journey far.

We've waited for your coming,
Have longed to see your face
And press you to our bosom
In loving, fond embrace.

From whence your young spirit came
We do not know nor can,
But somewhere God has kept you
Since first the world began.

And now He's sent you to us,
So gentle, pure and sweet,
For us to be your courtiers
And worship at your feet.

WHY BE A LAMB ?

★ ★ ★

If I were a lamb
They'd rob me of my fleece of wool
To make a coat for some poor fool,
And leave me naked, cold.

And when they'd fleeced me
I would be to the butcher sold,
And he'd skin me before I'm cold.
My life he would not spare.

And when he'd skinned me
He'd take me to his old meat shop
And carve me into nice lamb chop
Some epicure to please

Then my pelt he'd sell,
And from it they would leather make.
So thus my every part they'd take.
Sad fate of innocence.

Then why be a lamb ?
You're but a prey for wolf or man,
And they will skin you if they can,
Though innocent and meek.

Better a brave heart
And spirit bold that dares to fight
For what's your own and what is right
'Gainst Man's selfish greed.

Your own rights defend.
It is no virtue to submit
To wrongs and to supinely sit
While others, you, despoil.

TO KITTIE

Christmas, 1911

★ ★ ★

I am glad to greet you early
On this happy Christmas morn,
At your bounteous breakfast table
You so graciously adorn,
And to wish you "Merry Christmas"
From the bottom of my heart.
May the sunshine that it brings you
From your household ne'er depart.
That household now is larger far
Than when Christmas came before,
By the sweetest little maiden
Santa never saw before.
May God bless your happy household,
Father, Mother, Daughter, All,
And let no sorrow enter there,
Be that sorrow e'er so small.

THE MOUNTAIN TOP

★ ★ ★

Rise to the top of the mountain
And behold the glory of God;
You will miss all of its beauty
Staying in the valley you've trod.

The higher you climb the mountain,
The broader your vision will be;
The nearer you reach the summit,
The more of His glory you'll see.

It lights the world with a brightness
Neither the sun nor stars can give,
For it casts a light supernal
In which no night nor shadows live.

You'll shout for the joy it gives you,
And you will sing glad songs of praise
As you look on a world transfigured
In His own mysterious ways.

If you rise to the mountain top,
The nearer to Heaven you'll be,
And clearer you'll hear God's message
That He is now speaking to thee.

The road to the top may be rough,
And you may stumble and fall,
But if you once reach the summit,
Your steps you would never recall.

For there you will feel His presence,
And your soul will be set on fire;
To live for aye on the summit
Will be your consuming desire.

Abide on top of the mountain,
Nor yearn for the valley below,
And you will garner rich blessings,
That out of God's mercy will flow.

OLD PATSEY

★ ★ ★

Old Patsey is a Boston Bull.
His chest is broad and very full.
His two front legs, they are so bowed
It makes him walk quite pigeon-toed.
His ears are shaped as they should be,
For they are cropped in angles three.
In his short tail—for so it grew—
He always wears a crimp or two.
His lower jaw is undershot
As though its mate it had forgot,
Which makes him grin and show his teeth,
Although no mirth lies underneath.
He wears a coat of mottled brown
On which the hair lies smoothly down.
His stubby nose, it is turned up
As if he scorned a common pup.
He is a dog of high degree
And boasts an ancient pedigree.
His manners show, I tell you that
He is a great aristocrat.
When he takes hold he hangs on tight,
Yet he's not looking for a fight.
And this old dog, he is so smart
From him his master would not part.
Unlike most men, except a few,
To his old friends he's always true.
If fortune does upon them frown
He's not the one to turn them down.

TWO LITTLE WHITE STOCKINGS

Christmas, 1912

★ ★ ★

Two little white stockings, so tiny and dear,
Hang on the chimney for Santa this year.
He found only one on his visit before,
And now there are two,—I wish there were more.
The two little maidens to whom they belong
Have been cooing and playing all the day long,
Enchanting the home with music so sweet,
With cooing, and prattle, and patter of feet.
And now they're asleep in snow-white beds
With no thought of Christmas in their young heads.
So Santa Claus, dear, as you go around
All over the house, not making a sound,
Don't miss the wee stockings; one is so small
You might, passing by, not see it at all.
Fill the dear stockings until they run o'er
With all the love tokens you have in your store.
May the same loving hands that fill them this eve
Perform the same task each Christmas eve,
Till the dear stockings, clear down to their toes,
Have grown to the size of young ladies' hose,
And the dear maidens find stockings as small
On their chimney hung for Santa Claus' call.

MY MOTHER'S HAND

★ ★ ★

Long years have passed since I was born,
And near life's close I stand
Yet very clearly I recall
The touch of Mother's hand.

That hand I feel as when a child
She pressed me to her breast,
And soothed my pains, and calmed my fears,
As she her child caressed.

When fever burned, and for long hours
Beside my bed she'd stand,
There was no balm or solace like
The magic of her hand.

Where'er I've lived, where'er I've roamed,
In home or foreign land,
I've ne'er forgot the loving touch
Of my dear Mother's hand.

When back I turn to years gone by,
And my past life have scanned,
I trace along its tangled threads
The touch of Mother's hand.

When life and its burdens and pains
Seem more than I can stand,
I wish that I might have again
The help of her dear hand.

If all of Croesus' wealth I had,
And dwelt in castles grand,
I'd give them all to feel again
The touch of Mother's hand.

That hand is still, its task is o'er,
And she has gone to rest,
But she still lives within her child
That she in life so blessed.

When o'er the dark river I've crossed,
On Heaven's green shore to stand,
How great my bliss and joy will be
To clasp my Mother's hand.

TO SANTA CLAUS

★ ★ ★

Here is to Santa Claus, the children's dear friend !
That he'll never forget them, they can depend.
Just the presents they want, he surely will bring,
Though the weather be cold and frost has a sting.
No day is so stormy but what he'll come 'round,
His reindeers a-prancing with sleigh-bells' sweet sound.
No gift is so heavy, or bundle so great,
But what he will hasten, so he'll not be late.
When the frost's in the air and snow on the ground,
He'll visit the children when Christmas comes 'round.
Though his journey be long, and weather be cold,
You could not detain him with silver or gold.
That he's learned the old lesson, all must believe,
That is: It's more blessed to give than receive.
The broad smile on his face is pleasant to see
When his gifts are received in sweet harmony.
If children are selfish and want all the best,
He leaves them no presents, but gives to the rest.
Here's to dear Santa Claus, who'll never grow old !
Bring cheer to the children the same as of old,
And fill up their stockings the same as of yore,
And they will give blessings, a hundred or more.

MY HEART IS IN ERIN

★ ★ ★

I'm an Irishman born, a son of the sod,
And though in my time many lands I have trod,
The spirit of Ireland still stirs in my blood:
For justice to Ireland I always have stood.

Chorus:

Old Ireland, my country, lies over the sea;
The land of the shamrock I long for to see;
Old Ireland, my country, is dear unto me,
My heart is in Erin and ever will be.

The children of Erin wherever they stray,
For blessings to Ireland cease never to pray,
Or to sing her sweet songs all over again;
And their songs and their prayers give forth the refrain:
Chorus.

Misrule and oppression have blighted the land,
And long we have struggled to loosen their hand;
The spirit of Ireland they cannot subdue;
To Erin, dear country, her sons have been true.
Chorus.

Though long we have waited, contended and fought,
The victory will come for which we have wrought,
And Ireland, our country, before very long
Will take her true station the nations among.
Chorus.

We'll waken the harp that's been silent so long,
And attune it again to Freedom's glad song,
When Ireland, our country, in justice shall be
Restored to her freedom and own liberty.
Chorus.

TO MARY ELIZABETH

Christmas, 1916

★ ★ ★

There is a little lady
That stole this heart of mine,
And she still retains it,
That little girl of mine.

She has grown much taller
Since first I saw her face;
As she's grown in stature
She's also grown in grace.

She has two little sisters,
And a young brother fine,
Who also hold a place
In this big heart of mine.

But they cannot crowd her
From this big heart of mine,
Though they're just as lovely
As that little girl of mine.

And her name is written
In this big heart of mine,
In large letters written
So they'll endure all time.

As her name is written,
No other can supplant.
It is plainly written,
Mary Elizabeth Grant.

TO KATRINA

Christmas, 1916

★ ★ ★

If little girls were roses
All hanging on a tree,
No rosebush in the world
Would be so sweet to see.

If I were to pick one
That seemed the best to me,
I would not be puzzled
By the variety.

I'd choose not Mabel fair,
Nor yet dear Edwena;
I'd run right to the tree
And pick my Katrina.

TO JEAN ANN

Christmas, 1916

★ ★ ★

I know a little maiden, but her name I will not tell;
It's written in a place, a place that's guarded well.

Written without letters, in that secret place of mine;
Written there so deeply it will never fade by time.

No one else can read it, though to me it's very plain;
I often peek at it and read it o'er again.

And when I peek at it, two bright eyes look up at me
In which I plainly read a wondrous prophecy.

Those eyes grip me tightly as they look up at me;
They sparkle like a diamond or the sun-glint on the sea.

And they speak as plainly as a story in a book;
You need ask no questions, you will understand their look.

Their message is so varied, and so swiftly does it come
That you wonder where they carry their rapid-firing gun.

I have loved the little maiden, yes, ever since she came;
No use for you to tease me, for I will not tell her name.

I'll let you peek a little, and if you're very keen
You can read a part of it, the part that's written "Jean."

The rest you cannot see, but you may guess it if you can;
Most people when they try to, guess the other part is "Ann."

TO GEORGE GRANT III.

Christmas, 1916

★ ★ ★

On the topmost bough hangs the choicest peach.
Now listen, my son, to what it will teach.
Shelter nor shadow retarded its growth,
Its place on the limb was high above both.
Kissed by the breezes and warmed by the sun,
It outstripped its fellows, every one.
When hard blew the wind and down poured the rain,
Its place at the top was hard to maintain.
The greater its struggle, 'gainst tempest's strong blast,
To cling to the limb just strengthened its clasp.
All of its struggles have brought it to be
The very best peach that hangs on the tree.
In life you will find this lesson too true,
The men at the top are always too few.
A place at the top is hard to attain,
And much harder still, a place to maintain.
It cannot be gained by luck or by chance;
Merit will win it, so strive to advance.
Too soon you will learn that prizes hang high,
And cannot be won by a wish or a sigh.
The road to the top isn't easy to climb;
He that would make it must work all the time.
The top is the place for which you should aim,
For there hangs the prize you should try to gain.
Now win for yourself a place in the sun
By honest endeavor, my little grandson.
For that is my own most earnest desire,
And know it would please your other grandsire.

PETER PAN THE PIPER MAN

★ ★ ★

(With apologies to Mother Goose)

Old Peter Pan, the piper man,
Stole a pig and away he ran.
Now I'll have meat, said Peter Pan,
Soon sizzling in my frying pan.
I'll escape, the piggy said,
Before I lose my very head,
For I don't like this piper man,
Nor the smell of his frying pan.

Chorus:

Peter, Peter, Peter Pan,
The old spookish piper man.

When Peter reached his spookish house
He had the piggy in his blouse.
Old Peter tried the pig to slay,
But Piggy jumped and ran away.
When Peter saw the pig was gone
He blew his pipe both loud and long
And called the elfins from the glen
To run and catch that pig again.

Chorus.

The elfins ran so very fast
They caught the piggy's tail at last;
But on that tail they could not hold,
For it was greased, so we are told.
When piggy reached its master's house
It ran into its piggy house,
And there was safe from Peter Pan,
So back again the elfins ran.

Chorus.

When Peter lost his piggy meat
He had no other food to eat.
For want of food he starved to death,
But blew his pipe with his last breath.
The pipe was heard down in the glen
And called the elfins back again,
Who buried that old spookish man,
So that's the last of Peter Pan.

Chorus.

FRIENDS

★ ★ ★

Flowers of beauty soon will fade
That decorate earth's lovely face.
Friends true and tried will vanish
From their long accustomed place.

Other flowers will come again
With colors no less charming,
But hearts as warm as those we've lost
Will never be returning.

Flowers fade; their beauties pass,
And all their perfumes soon depart.
True friendship's fragrance still remains
Though the friends from earth depart.

So here's my hand to you, my friends,
Let us sit down together
And warm our hearts by friendship's fire
Ere time the bond doth sever.

DO YOUR PART

(1918)

★ ★ ★

Unless you will help,
Get out of the road;
You must not obstruct
Those bearing the load.

If you are ready,
Then just fall in line,
And march to the front
Without losing time.

Your country demands
That you do your part;
So do it quickly—
And with a whole heart.

If all our small "bits"
In one we'd combine,
We'd soon sweep the Hun
Back over the Rhine.

You must not delay,
Nor think of the cost;
Quick, join in the fight,
Or all may be lost.

Back up the brave boys
Who've gone "over there"
Our battles to fight,
Great hardships to bear.

Down with the slacker
Who won't do his share;
He's of the same ilk
As the vile profiteer.

THE FLAG OF FREEDOM



Raise that Starry Banner,
Unfurl it to the breeze;
It stands for freedom here
And freedom of the seas.

Let it bear this message
To the peoples of the world:
Men are free and equal
Wherever it's unfurled.

They who live beneath it
Are measured by their worth,
And no man can rule them
By accident of birth.

It is pledged to justice
And equal rights for all
Among men and nations,
The mighty and the small.

It sheds its glories o'er
A free and happy land,
Where no slaves' fetters clang
Or waves the sceptered hand.

It shall forever stand
For what it e'er has stood—
God-given rights of man.
A pledge that's sealed in blood.

Mighty was the struggle
That gave that emblem birth,
When men fought to banish
Injustice from the earth.

None have triumphed o'er it,
It holds its lustre still;
Brave men did defend it,
And now we must and will.

God bless that Starry Flag,
Proud emblem of the free;
Help us to uphold it
On land and on the sea.

CASTLES IN THE AIR

★ ★ ★

The world is filled with castles
All builded in the air,
The builders never entered,
Though builded with great care.

They are filled with ashes
Of dreams of ladies fair,
Of men's vain ambitions
All burned to ashes there.

Only ghosts live in them
Or pass their portals fair;
No sound is heard in them
Save wailings of despair.

Men and women still are
Building castles in the air,
Unmindful of the truth
They must the same fate share.

Men may plan and labor
To build their castles rare,
But they will fall when built
On sand or in the air.

Truth's the rock foundation
Upon which all should build
If they'd gain their purpose
Or see their aims fulfilled.

What's false can not endure
The acid test of time,
And its false glitter oft
Is the mirage of crime.

All then should choose the right,
And labor it to gain,
And if the fight is lost,
The loss will not cause pain.

CHRIST, THE IDEAL

★ ★ ★

And I, if I be lifted up,
To me all men I'll draw:
Thus spake the Christ in prophet's tones
As He a vision saw.

Saw what His life for man would do
When to man's life applied;
The beauty that all lives would bear
When with His life allied.

No cross of wood that scene disclosed
That passed before His eyes;
Nor spake He of His hanging there
A living sacrifice.

Should love and truth exalted be,
And o'er all else be raised,
He saw the world all drawn to Him
As on that scene He gazed.

He also saw that should men strive
Their lives from sin to free,
They'd turn to Him to learn the way,
He'd their ideal be.

TO A SPRING BEAUTY

★ ★ ★

My Pretty Flower, whence came you
To tell us spring is here again;
That icy winds have ceased to blow
And winter has resigned its reign?

It's not enough for you to say
That from the cold damp ground you sprung,
That you were wakened from your sleep
By warmth and brightness of the sun.

No, that does not the secret tell.
There is a mystery profound.
You hold some hidden secret yet
That does the wisest men confound.

The rock to which your rootlets cling
Received the same warmth from the sun,
Yet it remains unmoved, nor changed,
And will through all the years to come.

Some vast, inscrutable power,
Hidden within your fragile form,
In silence raised you from the ground
And did with beauty you adorn.

You plainly tell me it is life;
But what life is, you do not tell.
That is the secret I would know,
But cannot learn. You guard it well.

THE BULLFROG

★ ★ ★

On the bank of a pond
Sat an ancient bullfrog
And gazed in the water
At his child, Polly Wog.

The sad look on his face
Was most touching to see,
As he said to himself,
How could that spring from me ?

It looks like a button
Steered around by a tail,
And it has not a leg,
So in water must sail.

I am furnished with legs
On which to move around;
And in water can swim,
Also hop on the ground.

No sound can it utter;
It's as dumb as a fish;
While a bass voice I have
That I use when I wish.

He swung his legs round
In his quest for a tail,
Not knowing that Nature
Had ways, frogs, to de-tail.

He sat long on that bank
Thinking why it should be
That a frog should be cursed
With such strange progeny.

If that is my offspring,
Very sadly he spoke,
With a tear in his voice,
Then, I'm ready to croak.

THE RIVER OF LIFE

★ ★ ★

Strong and deep flows the river of life
From its source away down to the sea.
It sweeps us on, on its current strong,
Beyond the veil of eternity.

Our barks move not at an even pace
As adown that broad river they go;
Some sail along at a swifter gait
As they are caught by the undertow.

Strive as we will, we cannot o'ercome
The force of that stream that bears us on,
For it brooks no stop nor backward turn
Once the voyage is entered upon.

Each must sail his frail bark all alone,
Without captain or pilot or chart,
Over waters smooth and waters rough,
For it is of life's journey a part.

There is but one star to guide our way
To where that stream flows into the sea:
It's faith in Him who created us
And who watches o'er our destiny.

BROTHERS



As along life's highway you pass,
In great haste your goal to attain,
You meet many hearts that are sad
And broken with burdens and pain.

Souls that have broke from their anchor,
Afloat on the troubled sea,
Drifting by wind and by current
Toward danger they're unable to see.

Hearts that are starving for kindness
And for love they never have known;
Denied all human affection
And left in their struggle alone.

Others that are bravely fighting
Their virtue and honor to hold,
But who can feel their grip slipping
When tempted with pleasures and gold.

Some, the fruits of sin have gathered
Till their hampers are running o'er;
Their lives are all scarred and blackened,
And God's and man's laws they ignore.

Some whom you meet are discouraged,
Despondent and weary and faint,
Longing to cease the hard struggle
That would break the heart of a saint.

Do you know these are your brothers
You meet on the pathway of life,
Who need your kindly assistance
In their uphill struggle of life?

Pass them not by in their trouble
And leave them to bear it alone;
Remember you are their brother,
And you should not give them a stone.

No matter how lowly they are,
Their claims you cannot ignore;
Be good Samaritan to them,
The same as The Christ taught of yore.

TOAST TO "CAPTAIN BILL" MERSHON

★ ★ ★

Come, fellows, gather 'round the board,
As you have often done before,
And fill your beakers to the brim,
As in the good old days of yore.

George and Jack are in their places,
Also Monty, Eb and Charley,
While the Captain heads the table.
Come on, Clark, and stop your parley.

I see four places at the board
At which four empty glasses stand.
Quick, Alfons, fill them up with wine;
Ask not why, 'cause we understand.

Hark! I hear a soft, low whistle
That sounds familiar to my ear;
Ah! a signal from the Major
That our old friends are drawing near.

Make room: here come the shades of Tom,
Of Watts, Waldo and the Major,
To claim their places at the board.
That they'd join us, you might wager!

The gates of heaven could not hold them,
Nor stern St. Peter thwart their will,
So as to prevent their coming
To join our toast to Captain Bill.

Now raise your glasses from the board;
A single drop you must not spill,
For we'll drain them to the bottom
As we all drink to Captain Bill.

On many a trip he's led us,
And for many a pleasant day,
To where the large trout are leaping
And where the wary partridge stay.

To where the wild geese are feeding,
And the ducks in reeds are splashing;
To where the grouse and prairie hens
In great numbers may be flocking.

In arranging all our comforts
In camp or cabin, lodge or car,
E'en supervising the cuisine,
He is the sole executor.

When the meal is over, and we
Do 'round the board still tarry,
How often have we all enjoyed
His keen quip and thrust and parry.

We have heard rare words of wisdom,
With our heads still on the eider,
In his long discourse with Alfons,
As he sits and sips his cider.

That our goods might pass through Portal
While we our morning slumbers took,
He has risen bright and early
And sallied forth and kissed "The Book."

Whene'er we receive a letter
From our versatile Captain Bill,
We need not to ask its meaning,
For it's as pointed as his quill.

We all love the outdoor better,
With its birds and trees and flowers,
With its woods and lakes and rivers,
Because he's made his pleasure ours.

When the May flowers are in bloom,
And when the fishing days have come;
When the leaves have changed their color
And we go forth with dog and gun;

When the geese and ducks are flying,
And when we leave our office grim
To answer the wild wood calling,
Ah! then we always think of him.

We admire him as a sportsman,
And we all love him as a man;
We have fished and hunted with him,
And that is why we understand.

We know he's played life's game squarely;
Yes, and all other games as well.
Yet, he has been caught at bluffing
When the jack-pot begins to swell.

When his last chip is on the table,
And he's "called" from the other land,
Here is trusting, hoping, praying
That he will hold the winning hand.

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